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ABSTRACT

Central to the process of reading comprehension is the use of questions and discussions in the classroom in order to direct and to evaluate a student's level of understanding of the materials read. Researchers estimate that approximately 70% of teaching involves the technique of questioning students. It is important that teachers do more than ask cognitive memory questions that require only literal recall of information. A technique that can be useful to reading and literature teachers is Lawrence Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Approach to Moral Education. Kohlberg lists six stages of moral development based on theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget, and many recent writers have suggested ways to use these levels of moral reasoning as the basis for classroom questioning. A study was conducted that indicated that when Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning were used with sixth grade students, white females increased in inferential comprehension scores. Differences in values between males and females and between races provide another reason to make use of questioning based on levels of moral values relevant to the classroom. (MKM)

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UTILIZING MORAL DILEMMAS TO ENHANCE COMPREHENSION

Cassandra H. Kennon

Central to the process of reading comprehension is the use of questions and discussions in the classroom in order to direct and to evaluate a student's level of understanding of the materials read. Aulls (1978) indicated that approximately seventy percent of teaching involves the technique of questioning students. Sanders (1966) stated, "A certain kind of question leads to a certain kind of thinking" (p. 8). He hypothesized that through careful use of questions, problems, and projects, teachers can lead students into all kinds of thinking, and that "some teachers intuitively ask questions of high quality, but far too many overly emphasize those that require students only to remember, and practically no teacher makes full use of all worthwhile kinds of questions" (p. 2). Guszak (1967) suggested that from fifty to seventy percent of all questions asked during a guided reading lesson are literal recall questions. Guszak revealed that much of what goes on in classrooms fails to develop inferential and critical comprehension and actually works against these reading skills. Smith (1975) warned that reading rate becomes so slow that comprehension decreases when students are made to remember large amounts of detailed information; therefore, he suggested that a shift is needed away from literal comprehension to higher levels of comprehension.

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Lundsteen (1972) warned that too much emphasis is placed on literal comprehension in reading instruction. The literal level of reading requires very little thinking on the part of the reader. Lundsteen saw a great need for reading that requires inferential thinking for the following reasons:

> The mass media tends to produce conformity rather than individuality in children.
>
> There is some evidence that misconceptions acquired from mass media already are difficult to change by fourth grade; and
>
> abilities in critical reading and listening do not develop automatically, but rather they must be taught (p. 271).

Quandt (1977) stressed that teachers should eliminate emphasis on finding the literal or one right answer and move to more analytical comprehension activities. Quandt also suggested that there is little evidence that mastery of any one level of comprehension is prerequisite to the mastery of any other level of comprehension.

Taba, Levine, and Elzey (1964) found that an almost perfect correlation existed between the types of questions asked by teachers and the levels of comprehension students display in their answers. Hunkins (1968) demonstrated that a group of sixth graders who were consistently asked high level questions made significantly higher scores in social study achievement than students who were only asked low level questions.

Gall and colleagues (1977) conducted two experiments to determine the effects os sixth grade teachers' use of certain

questioning skills. The first experiment sought to determine what student learning outcomes are affected by teachers' use of probing and redirection questions in classroom discussions. The second study was conducted to determine what student learning outcomes are affected by variation in teachers' use of higher cognitive questions. The findings of both studies indicated that discussions in which the students' responses are probed and redirected by the teacher were effective in promoting student achievement.

Spache and Spache (1977) emphasized two points in comprehension development.

> First, the types and degree of comprehension and critical reading that students will learn to show reflect the direct influence of the teacher's habits of questioning. Second, few of the reading behaviors we expect to see in comprehension or critical reading, except perhaps vague main ideas and retention of scattered details appear spontaneously among pupils. Even students who are good readers in that they can handle the materials of their grade level do not either feel the need or show facility in reading critically, unless urged or trained to do so. Even high school and college students focus on remembering facts and show little awareness of the need for evaluation, despite the fact that the materials they read may be slanted, distorted, or questionable. It is feasible, then, from the very beginning stages of reading to direct children toward the patterns of comprehending and critical thinking we feel are essential by the nature of our questioning (p. 452).

Spache and Spache (1977) cited David B. Doake of Christchurch Teachers College in his master's thesis as finding:

> Prereading reasoning questions produced the best long-term retention of key ideas and the supporting facts.

> In contrast, prereading factual questions, as we have noted, result in poor immediate recall of related facts, or, in other words, limit total comprehension; and also increase the students' reading time.
>
> Postreading reasoning questions help the student retain the key ideas of a selection but not necessarily all the facts supporting these ideas. Postreading factual questions helped retention of key ideas and supporting facts, but not any more than prereading factual questions or instruction "to read carefully." If we want broader comprehension, we should use prereading reasoning questions (p. 458).

Aulls (1978) stressed that in view of recent research, teachers who ask cognitive memory questions that require literal recall of information, short factual answers, predictable responses based on the literal meaning of the material or predictable responses such as yes or no do little to enhance growth in reading comprehension. Convergent questions that require students to explain, identify cause and effect, compare and contrast, or interpret relationships seldom involve students in imagining and reacting to events and characters.

Aulls asked, "Just what facts are so important in fictional stories that students should commit them to memory? What basis does the teacher have for assuming there is one best interpretation of a character's actions, its theme, or why the events occurred as they did?" (p. 17) A higher level of questioning such as divergent and evaluative questioning leads the reader to move beyond the stated information and to think about possible meanings, or to use the information to develop new meanings or insights. Divergent questions require no one

right answer; rather, they involve the student in hypothesizing, predicting, imagining, and reconstructing. Questions of opinion and values are primarily evaluative questions.

Aulls saw the involvement of students in thinking divergently about what they read as a "powerful and exciting avenue to reacting to literature" (p. 17). Students involved in divergent and evaluative questioning listen to other students' reasoning. The success of presenting divergent and evaluative questions depends upon the guidance of the teacher in the dialogue carried on between the student and teacher, his peers, and the reader's own dialogue with himself. The teacher must learn to be accepting of varying responses and must encourage students to react to their peers' responses. The teacher must be able to draw those who are not participating into the group and allow them to express their opinions.

Kohlberg's (1976) Cognitive Developmental Approach to Moral Education utilized divergent and evaluative questioning techniques. Kohlberg felt that the most common system of moral education in America is an unconscious system--the "hidden curriculum" which mainly involves school or teachers' methods of classroom management. Moral education like intellectual education stimulates the "active" thinking of the child about moral issues and decisions. The movement through moral stages makes the approach developmental.

Through longitudinal and cross cultural studies, Kohlberg (1975) extended, redefined, and validated the Dewey-Piaget levels and stages. Using hypothetical, ethical dilemmas, Kohlberg interviewed children and adults in several geographically and culturally diverse areas. He identified three levels of moral development in all of the cultures he studied. Each level has two stages, resulting in six stage of moral reasoning.

Preconventional Level

Stage 1: Punishment and obedience orientation. The physical consequences of an action determine whether it is good or bad, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority.

Stage 2: The instrumental relativist orientation. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the marketplace. Elements of fairness, of reciprocity, and of equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

Conventional Level

Stage 3: The interpersonal concordance or "good boy-nice girl" orientation. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or "natural" behavior. Behavior is frequently judged by intention--"he means well" becomes important for the first time. One earns approval by being "nice."

Stage 4: The "law and order" orientation. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order.

Postconventional Level

Stage 5: The social-contract, legalistic orientation. Generally with utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Aside from what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal "values" and "opinion." The result is an emphasis upon the "legal point of view," but with an emphasis upon the possibility of changing law in terms of rational considerations of social utility. Outside the legal realm, free agreement and contract are the binding elements of obligation. This is the "official" morality of the American government and constitution.

Stage 6: The universal ethical principle orientation. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical; they are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of the human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons (Kohlberg, 1976, pp. 215-216).

Kohlberg advocated that students' ability to reason morally should be developed through discussion of "moral dilemmas," and then exposure should be given to different justifications presented by other students or the teacher for various resolutions of these dilemmas. A moral dilemma is a situation in which an individual is faced with a choice

of two or more courses of action. All of these courses of action are possible and feasible under the circumstances, but none of the courses of action can be followed without producing some sort of physical or mental stress or conflict. These dilemmas have no one "right answer." Instead, individuals are required to seek their own personal right answer by discussing the dilemma and by exposure to other points of view. In this way, the development of moral reasoning is stimulated (Fraenkel, 1977).

The movement from stage to stage in moral development is a long term process, and it is not automatic. In the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education, open peer discussions stimulate movement to the next stage of reasoning. Kohlberg has demonstrated that students with extensive peer group participation advance more quickly than those students who do not experience this participation (Fraenkel, 1977).

Beyer (1976) and Galbraith and Jones (1975) developed a model teaching strategy for conducting moral discussions which included general instructions for presenting original dilemmas, alternative dilemmas to use if the original dilemma fails to promote controversy, and a list of probe questions. Life in our society, life experiences of students, and course content were suggested as three sources of dilemmas. Beyer described four criteria moral dilemmas must meet:

1. A moral dilemma must be as simple as possible and must involve only a few characters in a relatively uncomplicated situation which students can grasp readily.

2. A moral dilemma should be open-ended and present a problematic situation in which there is no single obvious right answer.

3. A dilemma should involve two or more issues that have moral implications. Among key issues identified by Kohlberg are punishment, affectional relations, authority, contract, property, life, civil liberties, and personal conscience.

4. A moral dilemma must offer a choice of actions and pose the question "What should the central character do?" Should asks students to decide what is the right or correct or good thing to do. "Would" does not generate moral reasoning (p. 198).

Students and teachers often do not need to devote an entire class period to every moral discussion. Some discussions may arise spontaneously. Sometimes these discussions may be effective in large groups as well as in small groups. Beyer (1976) suggested three techniques that teachers can use to keep the discussion focused on the moral issues. First, students should be kept on the subject of the moral issue and stopped from any diversions from the issue. Second, they should encourage discussion among students who argue at contiguous stages. Finally, the teacher should use probe questions to bring into focus forgotten issues. There are five types of probe questions. A clarifying probe calls on students to define terms they have used or to explain a comment such as a student might make, "I would feel responsible for my brother." The teacher might ask, "What do you

mean by 'responsible'?" A specific-issue probe encourages students to examine their thoughts about one of the major issues Kohlberg claimed provided a focus for moral reasoning. "What obligations do you owe to a brother?" reflects the specific issue of affectional relations. An inter-issue probe encourages students to think about a conflict between two issues such as "Which is more important, loyalty to a brother or looking out for your own welfare?" "Why?" A role-switch involves substitution of students in the role of someone else in the story. A universal consequence probe asks students to consider what might happen if such reasoning were applied to everyone, "Is it ever right to think of yourself first?"

Recent articles (Biskin and Hoskisson, 1974; Gosa, 1977; and Moir, 1977) present Kohlberg's stages of moral thinking as a basis for selecting children's literature for moral education. They suggested that children's literature has an enormous potential to develop moral structures. Since the development in moral thinking differs little from the development of cognitive thinking, the school's program should be based on developmental stages, regardless of the culture or social background of the children.

Much of Kohlberg's work is based on the thinking of John Dewey and especially on the stage theory of Jean Piaget. Piaget viewed cognitive development as a process that takes

place naturally as children mature and interact with the environment. All children go through certain periods of cognitive development, but they do not all move at the same rate nor do they all reach the highest period of formal operations. At about the age of eleven, children are leaving Piaget's concrete operations stage and entering the formal operation stage. The level of thinking of those adolescents remaining in the concrete operations stage is quite literal, lacking mental maturity to deal with abstract concepts. These adolescents prefer books that relate to everyday experiences where the good guy wins and the bad guy loses. Adolescents in the formal operations stage have the capacity for high level abstract thinking. During this period the child develops the ability to analyze different ways of reasoning. They enjoy books that argue and reason about the meaning of life and social inequities. They can deal with symbolic meanings and stories with a moral.

Early adolescent literature raises many conflicts and issues which need to be discussed in the classroom. Moir (1977) said that it has always been the assumption of adults that books have the power to influence the attitudes, values, and behavior of readers. Adults have assumed that if books presented enough models of "good" character traits, then these "good" traits would be adopted by the reader. Good characters were always rewarded and the bad characters were given their

punishment. Most often the reasons for the decisions made by characters must be inferred by the reader. Simply giving children example of good behavior is insufficient. Children need to be allowed to reason according to their psychological/ cognitive capacities and their understanding of justice, empathy, and human worth and dignity.

Pickarts and Fargo (1971) advocated that early adolescence is an ideal time to initiate moral reasoning activities since this is the time when adolescents, teachers, and parents are caught in the turmoil of change and are deeply disturbed by the radical differences in attitudes, behaviors, values, and goals between generations. Parents and teachers find that they no longer speak the langauage of children. It is at this time they need to help children define their values.

Johnson (1970) advocated that many black adolescents have not acquired from their subculture the language patterns, the value system, or the attitudes and beliefs demanded by the school. They feel that society has rejected them because they are black. This feeling of rejection has produced a poor self-concept and has developed revengeful and violent attitudes toward white society. Revengeful attitudes cause black adolescents to reject the three authority figures of the white society that they come into contact with most frequently; the policeman, the white businessman, and the white teacher. Johnson predicted that white teachers will find it increasingly

difficult to work with black students because of their attitude. He also advocated that reading programs do not meet the needs of black adolescents. Moral reasoning discussions on current literature dealing with dilemmas familiar to black adolescents could assist them in their own "process of self-definition".

A study was conducted by this author to investigate the effectiveness of Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Approach to Moral Education on the development of literal and inferential comprehension in reading in sixth grade students. The controlling question was: Can Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Approach to Moral Education enhance literal and inferential comprehension in sixth grade students? To secure data in response to the major question, the study attempted to answer the following specific questions:

1. Will literal and inferential comprehension scores be higher in the group taught by moral dilemma questioning and discussion techniques than in the group taught by the Directed Reading Activity or the group participating in the routine classes?

2. Is the effect of the treatment the same for males and females, blacks and whites?

The sample used in this study consisted of 87 sixth grade students in three intact classes of 29 students each in a southern elementary school. Classes were randomly assigned to a Treatment group, Comparison I group, and Comparison II group. All groups continued to participate in the regularly scheduled reading lessons. The Treatment group

read two novels, Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell and Sounder by William H. Armstrong. They participated in small and large group discussions of moral dilemmas found in the reading material. The teacher asked probe and redirection questions as the students presented different justifications for various resolutions of the dilemmas. The Sharecropper's dilemma illustrates how discussions were conducted.

The black sharecropper"s wife and children were starving, so he stole a ham to feed them. The following passage from Sounder describes the arrest of the sharecropper by the posse:

> The third day after the boy had awakened to the smell of ham bone and pork sausage, it was still cold and wind still blew. But the cabin still smelled good, and there was plenty to eat. Just as dark was gathering, the boy started to go to the woodpile to bring in wood for the night. The dim light of the lamp ran past the boy as he stood motionless in the open cabin door.
>
> "Shut the door," the boy's Father called from where he sat near the stove. But the boy did not move.
>
> Just past the edge of the porch three white men stood in the dim light. Their heavy boots rattled the porch floor, and the boy backed quickly into the cabin as they pushed their way in.
>
> "There are two things I can smell a mile," the first man said in a loud voice. "One's a ham cookin' and the other's a thievin nigger."

SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT THE SHARECROPPER HAVE STOLEN THE HAM?

Alternatives. If the members of the class agree that the sharecropper should have stolen the ham, say:

1. Suppose that the sharecropper had lost his money in a poker game Saturday night.

2. Suppose that the sharecropper was shiftless and lazy.

If the members of the class agree that the sharecropper should not have stolen the ham:

1. Suppose the Father has worked hard and faithfully as a sharecropper for many years. The landowner was wealthy but had not shared any of the profits with the sharecropper for months.

2. Suppose two of the sharecropper's small children were dying of starvation.

Probe Questions:

1. What does "breaking the law" mean?

2. Did the sharecropper have an obligation to his family, the law, the landowner? Why or why not?

3. Which set of obligations, to his family, to the law, or to the landowner were most important? Why?

4. From the point of view of the landowner (of the Mother, of the posse), was the sharecropper wrong? Why or why not?

5. Is it ever right to steal? If so, when? If not, why not?

The Comparison I group read the two novels, Island of the Blue Dolphins and Sounder and participated in a Directed Reading Activity which did not involve the discussion of moral dilemmas. The teacher asked literal, inferential, and critical questions during the discussion activities. Comparison II group continued to work with the regularly scheduled material in the class.

Pretests using the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Form A, Literal and Inferential subtests were administered to the three groups prior to the study, and posttests using the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Form B, Literal and

Inferential subtests were administered following completion of the study.

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (Barr, Goodnight, Sall, and Helwig, 1972). The four null hypotheses were tested by application of 3 x 2 x 2 analysis of covariance using regression procedures. A .05 level of significance was selected. Separate data analyses were computed for pretest and posttest literal and inferential scores for males and females, black and white students. Pretest scores for each group were compared to assess pre-experimental equivalence of groups, and adjusted posttest scores for each group were then compared to determine the effects of the treatment. A Scheffe' test was calculated in order to determine the means between which significant differences existed. Following are the findings relevant to the four null hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis 1

> Analysis of covariance revealed that adjusted posttest means of literal and inferential comprehension of the Treatment and Comparison I and Comparison II group subjects did not differ significantly. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2

> Analysis of covariance revealed that adjusted posttest means on literal and inferential comprehension scores for male and female subjects did not differ significantly; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 3

> Analysis of covariance revealed that adjusted posttest means on literal and inferential comprehension scores for black and white students did not differ significantly from the pretest mean; therefore, the null hypotheses was not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 4

Analysis of covariance revealed that adjusted posttest means on literal and inferential comprehension scores for the Treatment group and the two Comparison groups differed significantly for the different levels of sex or race and for the different combinations of race and sex. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclu-

were drawn:

1. That a significant difference (p .02) between the posttest means of the inferential subtest scores of the Treatment group and the Comparison groups existed for the different combinations of sex and race.

2. That white females in the Treatment group increased significantly (p .05) over white males in the Comparison I group.

There was a significant increase of white, female, Treatment group inferential scores over white, female, Comparison II group inferential scores. The white, female, Treatment subjects were involved in large group and small group discussions of moral dilemmas. The Comparison II group continued to work with the regularly scheduled classroom material which involved dictionary and summarization skills. There was a significant increase of white, male, Comparison II group inferential scores over white, male, Comparison I group inferential scores. The Comparison II group continued to work with the regularly scheduled classroom material which involved dictionary and and summarization skills while the Comparison I group participated in a Directed Reading Activity. These significant increases of inferential comprehension scores may

be attributed to several factors: (1) verbal participation required in the Treatment group and the Comparison I group, (2) the tendency of females to conform more readily than males, (3) the development of greater "prosocial" aggression in females, (4) greater adherence of females to societal moral codes, and (5) the tendency of females to pursue group activities as opposed to task oriented activities favored by males.

Verbal Participation. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) concluded that female superiority on verbal tasks has been one of the more solidly established generalizations in the field of sex differences. During the early years, verbal ability is evenly matched, but at about the age eleven, the sexes begin to diverge, with female superiority in verbal ability increasing. Females exceed boys in most aspects of verbal performance. They use longer sentences and are more fluent. Klausmeier and Wiersma (1964) found that females did better on a battery of divergent tasks that measured a variety of ideas produced for the solution of verbally presented problems. Therefore, females are more oriented toward the use of verbal means of problem solving.

In this study, moral dilemma discussions in the Treatment group required students to seek their own personal right answer by open peer discussion of the dilemma and by exposure to other points of view. The white, female, Treatment group increased significantly in inferential comprehension scores

over the white, female, Comparison II group. The Treatment group participated in activities which required verbal solutions of dilemmas while the Comparison II group was involved in nonverbal, task oriented activities required by the regularly scheduled reading lessons.

The white, male, Comparison II group increased significantly in inferential comprehension scores over the white, male Comparison I group. The Comparison II group participated in non-verbal, task oriented activities while the Comparison I group was involved in verbal short answers and discussion of literal, inferential, and critical questions asked by the teacher in the Directed Reading Activity.

Female Conformity. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) uncovered a consistent sex difference in their analysis of compliant behavior. Girls tend to conform more readily than boys to directives from parents and teachers. Girls are more obedient and amenable to social controls (Bakan, 1966), more responsible (Koch, 1955a), friendlier to teachers, and more responsive to their approval (Bakan, 1966; Garai, 1968, Koch, 1955a, 1955b). Girls are more cooperative, more sensitive to social expectations, more responsive to prestige suggestion, and more discriminative of socially approved behavior (Bakan, 1966). Kohlberg (1966) viewed females as the more adpative and conforming sex.

The change in the methodology of instruction in the classroom with the Treatment group which participated in moral

dilemma discussions and the Comparison I group which participated in a Directed Reading Activity required immediate conformity of the students. As demonstrated by the above discussion, girls would be more likely to conform to the new methods. The reults of this study supported these conclusions by the increase in inferential comprehension by the white, female, Treatment group which required conformity over the Comparison II group which did not require conformity to a new method of teaching.

Ausubel and Sullivan (1970) stated that the greatest contrast between boys and girls lies in the area of aggressiveness-compliance. Boys are more aggressive, expressive of anger, negativistic and rebellious (Garai, 1968; Kcch, 19551; Sheehy, 1938; Vroegh, 1968) more revengeful, extrapunitive and alibi building (Koch, 1955a), more quarrelsome, given to teasing, and uncooperative with peers and teachers (Glidewell, 1966; Koch, 1955a). As demonstrated by the above discussion, boys would not likely be receptive to a new teaching situation in the classroom. These conclusions were also supported by the increase in the white, male, Comparison II group inferential scores over the white, male, Comparison I group. Comparison II subjects were not required to adapt to a new method of teaching wile Comparison I subjects were required to adapt to a new method.

<u>"Prosocial" Aggression</u>. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) found that parents and society made the greatest distinctions

in the rearing of boys and girls as far as aggression is concerned. A significant number of boys were allowed to show more aggression to other children, were permitted to express aggression toward their parents, and were more frequently encouraged to fight back if another child started a fight.

Girls develop greater "prosocial" aggression (strong verbalization about the goodness or badness of behavior, punishment and threat for bad behavior, and approval for verbal righteousness). This is encouraged by parents and society providing more praise for "good" behavior and withdrawal of love for "bad" behavior. Physical and antisocial aggression is less sacntioned for girls than boys in our culture, while physical aggression is often expected and rewarded for boys. "Prosocial" aggression is tolerated in girls but is likely to be labeled as "sissy" and unlikely to be rewarded either by peers or by parents when exhibited by boys.

This study required students participating in the Treatment group to publicly make judgments about the "goodness," "badness," "rightness," or "wrongness" of a moral dilemma. Greater "prosocial" aggression in girls attributed to the fact that girls increased significantly in inferential comprehension after participating in the moral discussion group.

Societal Moral Codes. As previously stated, Maccoby (1966) found that the significance of sex differences is unclear.

Summaries of studies on Piagetian aspects of moral maturity reveal few differences between boys and girls. Porteus and Johnson (1965) reported that girls were less accepting of the efficacy of severe punishment. Saltzstein and Diamond (1972) reported that in comparison with boys, girls were overrepresented at Kohlberg's Stage 3 and underrepresented at Stages 1 and 2 and 4 and 5. They attributed this to the fact that Stages 2 and 4 demand greater elements of aggression. Selman (1971), Keasey (1972) and Weisbroth (1970) found no sex differences in levels of moral judgments. Ausubel and Sullivan (1970) suggests the possibility that girls are more intrinsically valued by their parents, thus being greater satellizers, possibly accounting for rather consistent findings indicating greater adherence to societal moral codes. McDonald (1963) reported that girls more than boys consider stealing categorically wrong both in public and private situations. Girls tend to resist breaking a prohibition longer (Walters and Demkow, 1963). Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) and Sears, Rau and Alpert (1965) found mothers reported girls as less deviant from moral norms. However, boys in self reports presented themselves as less deviant, but Lansky, Crandall and others (1961) hypothesized that this may be a reflection of their tendency not to confess wrong doings as readily as girls. The tendency to confess or become upset after deviating from some norm is greater in girls than in

boys (Luria, Goldwasser, and Goldwasser, 1963; Porteus and Johnson, 1965; Rebelsky, Allinsmith and Grinder, 1963; Sears, Rau and Alpert, 1965).

The significant increase in the white, female, Treatment group inferential scores over the white, female Comparison II group supports research that suggests that females are greater satellizers with greater adherence to societal moral codes and suggests the willingness of females to openly discuss moral codes and wrong doings.

Group Activities Versus Task Oriented Activities. One of Maccoby and Jacklin's (1974) hypotheses about sex differences in achievement motivation is that both sexes are motivated to achieve, but they are oriented toward different kinds of achievement. Boys are primarily interested in achieving on tasks that deal with inanimate objects or impersonal ideas while girls are more interested in interaction with people. Long, Henderson and Ziller (1967) found that girls chose to pursue more group activities than boys did. Boys are slower to share under incentive conditions when compared with girls (Doland and Adelberg, 1967). When two sexes are working on a task, boys tend to be intrinsically interested in the task itself, wheras girls work primarily for the praise and approval of others (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). As Garai and Scheinfeld (1968) summarized, "From early childhood on, males appear to have greater achievement needs directed toward successful task achievement, while females exhibit greater affiliative or

social needs directed toward successful relations with the people in the environment" (p. 270). The two significant increases in inferential comprehension demonstrated by this study supports the above research. Participation in moral dilemma discussions in the Treatment group required interaction with peers. The white, female, Treatment group increased significantly in inferential comprehension over the Comparison II group which did not participate in moral discussions but dealt with inanimate objects and impersonal ideas. The white, male, Comparison II group inferential scores increased significantly over the white, male, Comparison I group. Comparison I group subjects participated in a Directed Reading Activity which required group discussion of literal, inferential, and critical questions while Comparison II group subjects dealt with inanimate objects and impersonal ideas.

It is important to examine areas in which significant results were obtained, but it is also important to examine areas in which significant results were not obtained. No significant results were obtained with the black groups. Johnson (1970) found that membership in the black subculture prevents black children from acquiring the middle-class cultural patterns on which almost all instructional materials and school curricula are based. Many black children have not acquired from their subculture the entire experiential

background which includes language patterns, value systems, attitudes, and beliefs that are demanded by the school.

Johnson also concluded that black life generates a value system that is often in opposition to the value system of the school. They tend to be aggressive, often valuing aggressiveness over intellectualism. Aggressive behavior is a necessary pattern since it is often a survival pattern. One of the reasons that black children often cannot work successfully in groups is that they are accustomed to using threats or physical force as a means of persuasion instead of discourse and cooperation.

Horner and Gussow (1970); Labov, Cohen, Robins and Lewis (1968); Labov (1969) pointed out a fallacy of research which consistently indicates that black children tend to be less verbal than middle class white children. Their studies indicated that the black child is not less verbal, but that the verbal output depends upon the social context in which the speaker finds himself. Many blacks have found themselves in hostile, threatening school situations which have inhibited their participation in group discussions.

In this study, literal and inferential comprehnsion scores were not higher in the group taught by moral dilemma questioning and discussion techniques than in the group taught by the Directed Reading Activity or the group participating in the routine classes. It is important to note previously mentioned research that indicates that white males and black children are

less verbal. As mentioned, verbal output depends upon the social context in which the speaker finds himself. Therefore, Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Approach to Moral Education might be more effective in increasing literal and inferential comprehension if social barriers inhibiting verbal participation were removed before implementation of the program. This would not only apply to racial context, but to all areas. Teachers would need to insure that the classroom fosters an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, and freedom of expression without criticism.

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